



Department of Justice

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HEROIN TRAFFICKERS PLEAD GUILTY TO OVERDOSE DEATH

COLUMBUS — Jose Manuel Cazares Contreras, age 30, and Victor Delgadillo Parra, age 21, pleaded guilty in United States Court here today to committing manslaughter when they sold heroin to a Grove City man who then died from an overdose of the drug.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, Anthony C. Marotta, Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration; Franklin County Sheriff Jim Karnes, and Grove City Police Chief Joseph Wise announced the pleas entered today before United States District Judge Edmund A. Sargus, Jr.

Each man pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute more than one kilogram of cocaine, punishable by 10 years to life imprisonment, and one count of conspiracy to distribute heroin resulting in serious bodily injury or death, punishable by 20 years to life imprisonment.

According to a statement of facts filed with their plea agreements, the DEA Columbus District Office, the Franklin County Sheriff's Office and the Grove City Police Department initiated an investigation in August 2007 into a Mexican black tar heroin trafficking organization operating in the greater Columbus, Ohio area. According to information received by investigators, heroin users called a local telephone number, spoke to an individual, later identified as Contreras, and ordered heroin. The individual in turn dispatched a runner, Parra, to deliver the heroin to the users.

Between August and October, 2007, investigators with the three agencies made several controlled purchases of heroin from the group.

On August 29, 2007, law enforcement responded to a report of an overdose death in Grove City. The Franklin County Coroner's Office ruled the cause of death a result of acute heroin intoxication. Investigators connected the heroin that killed the victim to Contreras and Parra. Both men are Mexican immigrants in the United States illegally.

Task Force agents arrested Contreras and Parra on October 17, 2007. They have been in custody since their arrest. They were indicted in November, 2007.

The case is the result of an ongoing investigation by an Ohio High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) task force, known as the Southwest Border Task Force. The Task Force has been in existence for approximately three years. It is funded by the Office of National Drug Control Policy. The Task Force's mission is to identify and dismantle drug trafficking organizations operating in Columbus, Ohio with direct ties to the southwest border of the United States and the Republic of Mexico.

Lockhart commended the investigation by the Grove City Police officers, Franklin County Sheriff's Deputies and DEA agents, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Dave DeVillers, and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney James Lowe from the Franklin County Prosecuting Attorneys Office who are prosecuting the case. Other agencies participating in the Task Force include the Fairfield Hocking Major Crimes Unit and Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation.

Judge Sargus will schedule a date for sentencing.

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